



Senior Lawyer Huon Chundy discusses a legal dispute with indigenous people.

BACKGROUND

The human rights picture in Cambodia has improved markedly since the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge in 1979. However, serious human rights issues remain. Despite the existence of labor unions since 1997, labor leaders continue to face threats and intimidation. USAID's current strategy is to improve the capacity of human rights organizations and legal professionals to challenge the political and judicial system for equitable treatment of all citizens. USAID programs also help enforce worker rights, and support impartial dispute resolution mechanisms.

PARTNERS

East West Management Institute (EWMI) - EWMI provides sub-grants and technical support to local NGOs through the Human Rights in Cambodia Project (HRCP). The HRCP project comprises: 1) a large-scale grants program to local human rights and legal aid organizations; 2) the Public Interest Legal Advocacy Project (PILAP), Cambodia's first high-impact legal advocacy organization; 3) a clinical legal education program to build the professional skills of new lawyers and to support the extension of the Bar to rural areas; and 4) technical capacity support in case management and legal analysis to local organizations.

American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS) - ACILS provides assistance to workers in the garment, tourism and education sectors to form and run democratic and professional unions. ACILS educates workers about their rights under the Labor Code and Constitution, enhancing the rule of law and governance practices in addressing the legal rights of workers.

Additionally, ACILS provides legal aid to workers' unions and technical support in negotiating collective-bargaining agreements with industry.

International Labor Organization (ILO) - ILO supports the Cambodian Labor Arbitration Council, a tripartite arrangement between workers, government and employers whose mandate is to independently and impartially hear labor disputes. The Council also provides training on law and procedures for arbitrators, workers', employers', judges, lawyers and other stakeholders. The Council is viewed as the only corruption-free body making judicial decisions and has improved labor-employer relations.

Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) - DC-Cam is Cambodia's only independent, non-governmental institution devoted to documenting the Khmer Rouge history. DC-Cam aims to collect evidence, conduct research, and promote accountability for the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge. USAID will establish an endowment to ensure future sustainability of DC-Cam.

RESULTS TO DATE

- Provided over \$2 million in sub-grants to local NGOs and PVOs to support promotion and protection of human rights through monitoring, advocacy, and legal aid. (EWMI).
- Launched a 10-month clinical education program that is now a requirement for all new lawyers. The program seeks to impart principles of rule of law and practical skills, and provides services through a walk-in legal aid clinic for the poor. (EWMI)
- The Public Interest Legal Advocacy Project at the Community Legal Education Center (CLEC/PILAP) has introduced new advocacy techniques on behalf of communities facing land dispossession. It is representing more than 40 families threatened with forced eviction on Koh Pich island; 350 families threatened with eviction from their homes in Phnom Penh; and villagers affected by an economic concession in Ratanikiri. (EWMI)
- Labor Arbitration Council (LAC) has accepted 145 cases involving more than 165,000 workers, and two-thirds of these disputes have been resolved. The LAC publishes its decisions regularly on its website in English and Khmer. (ILO)
- Nine collective bargaining agreements were negotiated between unions and industry. Also, over 2,200 enterprise leaders and 400 union federation leaders were trained in collective bargaining and union building. (ACILS)
- DC-Cam has catalogued over 20,000 Khmer Rouge biographies; collected and microfilmed official historical documents; interviewed over 1,500 survivors of the KR regime; trained 30 law students and NGO workers on international humanitarian and criminal law concepts; and received over 500 visitors to its archive and library.